



Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury

August 23, 2023

Campus Ministry Leaders Attempted to Defraud MTSU
Campus Outreach Director, Minister, and former Student President Indicted

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has resulted in the indictment of three men associated with Middle Tennessee State University's Campus Outreach ministry organization. The investigation began after MTSU's Internal Audit staff notified the Comptroller's Office about the situation.

Investigators determined that campus director John Thomas "JT" Farmer, campus minister Greg McCall, and MTSU's former student chapter president Austin "Audy" Smothers collaborated to submit a false reimbursement request in an attempt to steal \$4,700 in student activity fees from the university.

The three men claimed the money was spent to pay for students to attend a virtual New Year's Conference in late 2020, as MTSU's policies at that time prohibited reimbursements for travel expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, investigators confirmed the men had reserved cabins in Gatlinburg and planned for the conference to be held there in-person. This event was subsequently canceled. Farmer, McCall, and Smothers also collaborated to submit a fabricated receipt to MTSU to support their false reimbursement request in an attempt to induce MTSU to pay the claim.

Additionally, investigators noted that Campus Outreach at MTSU provided false information regarding its financial condition to MTSU. For example, on May 15, 2021 Campus Outreach at MTSU submitted a financial report form to the university indicating it had \$95 in its bank account. Investigators reviewed bank statements which showed the actual bank account balance on May 15, 2021 was \$59,727.37.

In August 2023, the Rutherford County Grand Jury indicted Farmer, McCall, and Smothers each for one count of attempted theft of property over \$2,500, one count of forgery, one count of criminal simulation, and one count of false entries in a government record.

"I am pleased to note that MTSU officials have made significant updates to the university's Student Activity Fee reimbursement procedures since this issue was first recognized," said Comptroller Jason Mumpower. "Establishing and following clear policies and procedures, which include reviewing required documentation, helps prevent fraudulent activity from occurring."

To view the investigative report, go to tncot.cc/doireports. To view a map depicting Comptroller investigations, go to tncot.cc/mappinginvestigations.

If you suspect fraud, waste, or abuse of public money in Tennessee, call the Comptroller's toll-free hotline at 800.232.5454, or file a report online at: tncot.cc/fraud. Follow us on twitter [@TNCOT](https://twitter.com/TNCOT) and Instagram [@tncot](https://www.instagram.com/tncot).

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